

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 JANUARY 2017 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBINING
ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: Cllr Miss Chantal Geall, in the Chair

Councillors: Mrs R Bolton, P Boyle, M Deards, R Deering, Mrs S Newton, Dr L Radford and Miss J Sartin

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Ruffles
Mr J Whelan, Town Clerk
Ms P Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Mr S Davies, Finance Manager

400. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

401. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Miss Geall and Miss Sartin	DPI	Any item relating to Museum	Trustees of Museum
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402. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 17 October 2017 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

403. ACTION SHEET

Castle Grounds

It was confirmed that the Town Clerk had approached East Herts Council regarding the future maintenance of the Castle Grounds but discussions had not yet commenced. A meeting regarding the Draft Management Plan will take place between officers early in the New Year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The action sheet be received and noted.

404. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

405. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION – CITIZENS ADVICE SERVICE

An application had been received from the Citizens Advice Service for £1,200 for new computer equipment for volunteers. Whilst happy to support the Citizens Advice Service, the Committee was keen to ensure that any donation towards the cost of computer equipment was used specifically in the office serving the residents of Hertford only.

The Committee further noted that neither Ware nor Bishop's Stortford Town Councils had supported the CAS recently and the Town Clerk was requested to approach these Councils to ascertain the reason.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** a grant of £1,200.

406. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE

The Committee received a copy of the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 14 November 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the draft report of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 14 November 2016.

407. HEALTH AND SAFETY REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the actions taken in regard to Health and Safety procedures. The Town Clerk advised that training was being arranged for fire marshals and that a further fire drill will take place shortly with the fire service present. Consideration would also be given to supplying the Fire Service with plans of each floor of the building and any other necessary information to assist them in the event of a fire at the Castle.

It was noted that all risk assessments were available for members to view in the office.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the Health and Safety Review.

408. TRAUMA TEDDIES

The Committee received a report from the Town Clerk regarding the requirement to ratify the expenditure made towards the Trauma Teddy initiative along with a recommendation that the expenditure be made from the Community Grants budget on this occasion.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Committee **notes** the report.
2. The Committee **approves** expenditure of £304.24 to be taken from the Community Grants budget.

409. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

The Committee was advised that the full Council Constitution was due for review and it was intended to hold a special F,P & A meeting on 23 January 2016 for members to consider these. Members were asked to look at the documents on the Council's website and advise the Town Clerk of any suggested changes.

The following documents from the Constitution were reviewed at the meeting:

- 1.1 Introduction to the Council
- 1.2 Residents and the Council
- 1.3 The Council's Powers and Functions
- 1.4 The Town Clerk and Other Managers
- 1.5 The Council's Assets

A discussion took place regarding document 1.2 'Residents and the Council', specifically regarding the Complaints procedure. Changes to wording were recommended, to state that complaints should be made to the Town Clerk.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that:

The above documents be referred to the next meeting of the Full Town Council for adoption.

410. HERTFORDSHIRE PENSION FUND, FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT CONSULTATION

The Council had received a consultation document from HCC on the Hertfordshire Pension Fund, Funding Strategy Statement.

Whilst not in a position to comment in detail on the consultation document, members nevertheless were interested to understand the makeup of the Board of Trustees and from where investment advice was sought, as well as confirmation as to whether the pension scheme was underwritten. Members were asked to advise the Town Clerk of any comments they would wish to make on the Funding Strategy Statement.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee delegates authority to the Town Clerk and the Chairman to respond to the Consultation on receipt of any comments received from members

411. FINANCE

(a) Bank Reconciliations

The Committee received the bank reconciliation summaries for September, October and November 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the bank reconciliation summaries for September, October and November 2016.

(b) Payment Schedules

The Committee received the payment schedules for September, October and November 2016. The Finance Manager was requested to amend certain descriptions within the summary sheets to make the descriptions clearer, prior to uploading to the website.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the payment schedules for September, October and November 2016.

(c) Past due debtors

The Committee noted there were no debtors over 90 days.

(d) Non Cheque Payments 2016/17

The Committee received a schedule of the non-cheque payments for April – November 2016/17.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the non-cheque payments for the April to November 2017

(e) Internal Audit Report

The Committee received a copy of the interim Internal Audit Report for 2016/17 and was pleased to note that no issues were raised. The Chairman invited members to consider whether there were any areas of Council work they would like the Auditor to investigate on his next visit.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the Interim Internal Audit Report for 2016/17.

(f) First Half Income and Expenditure

The Committee received a report outlining the first half year Income and Expenditure for 2016/17.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Council was likely to underspend on the current year's budget by £68,000 and this was as a result of savings within the Community Services budget and income received from sponsorship, room hire and income from stalls. The Committee wished to pass on its appreciation to the Council officers for their work in increasing room hire and weddings at the Castle.

The Committee had been requested to approve virements to various overspent budget lines, from underspent budget lines.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the income and expenditure to the 30th September 2016.
- b) The Committee **approves** a virement of £6,500 from budget code 7212 Castle Insurance to budget code 7035 Legal & Professional fees.
- c) The Committee **approves** a virement of £3,000 from budget code 7140 Civic Property to budget code 7070 IT Support.
- d) The Committee **approves** a virement of £1,700 from budget code 7003 Temporary staff wages to budget code 7205 Castle Rent.
- e) The Committee **approves** a virement of £3,000 from budget code 7080 Christmas Lights to budget code 6197 T&TIC Refurbishment.
- f) The Committee **approves** a virement of £2,500 from budget code 7080 Christmas Lights to budget code 6037 Town Centre Hanging Baskets.
- g) The Committee **approves** a virement of £2,000 from budget code 5250 Churchyard Trees to budget code 5355 Cemetery Trees.

(f) Draft Budget 2017/18

The Committee received a report outlining the draft budget for 2017/18, and the Chairman advised members that the projects recommended by the Committees were achievable without an increase on the Town Council's proportion of the Council Tax on a Band D property, due to the increase in the council tax base. The Chairman also advised that a new reserve for the purchase of new Cemetery land had been included in the budget at £10,000 and a further £2,000 had been added to the Pinehurst reserve for the replacement of play equipment due to wear and tear.

It was requested that a further £2,500 be added to the budget for the Town Development Fund to reflect expenditure on non- event based activities and a further £7,000 for a revised valuation of the Council's Art and Antiques.

Note: Cllrs Miss Geall and Sartin left the room prior to the following discussion taking place:

The Town Clerk noted within the report that the Museum had requested a 1% increase in its grant, but that the Council had added a 3% increase into all of its other budget lines. The Committee was asked to consider whether it would wish to increase the Museum budget by 3% to take account of any inflationary increases over the coming year. Whilst noting the very good work carried out by the Museum, members nevertheless recognised that the grant to the Museum was the Council's largest annual donation and given that a 1% increase had been requested, there was no necessity to increase it further.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the draft budget; and
- b) The Committee **approves** using fund from the New Homes Bonus for the contribution of £10,000 for repairs and stabilisation of the Militia Colours.
- c) The Committee **approves** using funds of £33,152 from the New Homes Bonus for the capital expenditure relating to the extension of the free town centre wifi.
- d) The Committee **approves** a budget for £2,500 for the Town Development Fund.
- e) The Committee **approves** a budget of £7,000 for a valuation of the Council's Arts and Antiques, for inclusion within the Asset Register.
- f) The Committee **recommends** a Precept of £1,103,800 to Full Town Council at the meeting to be held on 18th January 2016.

412. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relate to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded while the following items are discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

413. LAND NEXT TO 145 NORTH ROAD

The Committee received a report from the Town Clerk regarding a matter relating to land adjacent to 145 North Road.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

- b) The Committee **delegates** authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Cllr Deards to resolve the matter.

The meeting closed at 21:00